

FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's #

64-10

USGS Quad

Whitman

Area

Form #

2

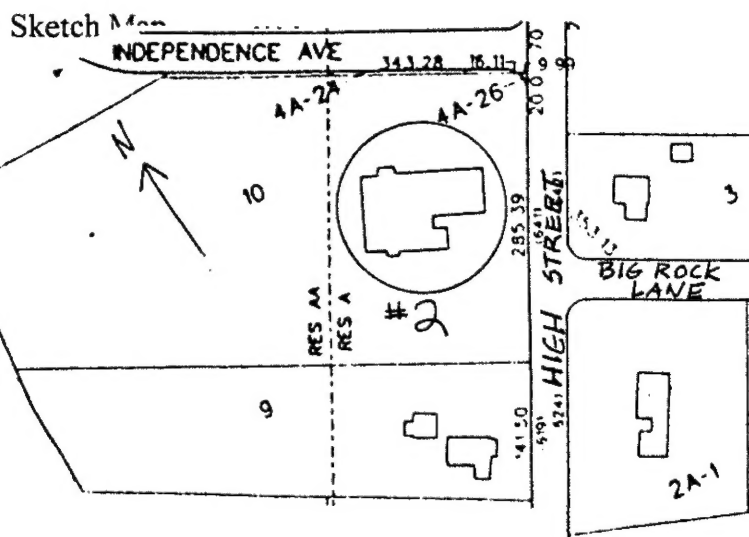
Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Town **Hanson**

Place

Photo roll/frame **2/10, 11**Address **641 High Street**Historic Name **First Congregational Church**Use: Present **church**Original **church**Date **1836**Source **maps & White Houses**Style/Form **Greek Revival/towered nave**Architect **N/A**

Exterior Material:

Foundation **granite**Wall/Trim **aluminum siding**Roof **asphalt**Outbuildings **none**Major Alterations **residing**Condition **good**Moved **no**Acreage **3.55 acres**Setting **village**Recorded by **Dempsey/Driemeyer**Organization **Hanson Historical
Commission**Date **February 1996**

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The First Congregational Church is a good example of an early nineteenth century church in the Greek Revival style such as are scattered throughout the New England landscape. Common massing characteristics include a gabled nave with symmetrical fenestration on the side elevations and a steepled tower centered on the gable end. The gable end is the most highly articulated portion of the three-bay wide by three-bay deep nave. The tower bay has an entry on the first story under a pair of elongated sash windows on the second story that accent the tower's verticality. The tower's openings are framed at the first and third bays with entries on the first story and full-story paired sash windows on the second story. Now clad with aluminum siding, the church retains its restrained classical detailing. This includes cornice returns on the gable end supported by molded Doric pilasters, wide Doric entablatures above the entries supported by Doric pilasters and Doric entablatures above all the windows. Three additional masses provide space for the church's ministerial and social activities. These include a one-story, five-bay, gabled rear ell; and a one-and-one-half storied, left-side wing. Small square entry porch additions are located at the first and last bay of the ell. The two-bay wing has pedimented gabled dormers on the front and rear roof slopes and an oversized gabled bay at the first bay. The third mass is a sizable, shed-roofed, one-story addition with a full-height basement that runs across the rear of the ell and wing. The church is set back from the street, with a semi-circular asphalt drive in front of the church. The rest of the lot is paved in asphalt to provide parking facilities for the congregation.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The present First Congregational Church was constructed in 1836. The church is sited on Bonney Hill the highest elevation in Hanson, which High Street traverses. Historical maps show that the northern half of High Street remained relatively undeveloped until the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century. Some discrepancy in the historical sources make it unclear at this time whether this structure is the second or third one on this particular site. The congregation, originally the West Parish of Pembroke, appears to have been established in 1748, slightly after the previous building's date of construction in 1745-46. The congregation remained without a permanent minister for over two years after that building's construction. The first minister was Dr. Gad Hitchcock, whose lengthy ministry spanned nearly fifty years. The eighteenth-century building probably had a characteristic meetinghouse form. Drew describes it as square and barn-like with a double row of windows and a large porch across the front with two entrances. In 1797 the structure was cut in half and 14 feet were added, presumably to transform the structure from a meetinghouse form to a nave-like form. A cupola replaced the steeple at the same time. According to White, the present structure, built by a Mr. Peterson, was originally meant to be 44' x 60', but was reduced by Peterson to 42' x 56'. Additions and alterations to the present structure include construction of the chapel in the mid-1880s and modernization of the vestry in 1935 to accommodate a dining hall and kitchen in the basement and an auditorium on the main level for Sunday school and social events.

REFERENCES

Smith, Plan of Hanson, 1830

Walling, Map of Hanson, 1856

Walker, Atlas of Plymouth County, 1879

Richards, Atlas of Plymouth County, 1903

White, Houses of Hanson

Drew, "Address Delivered at First Congregational Church," 8 September, 1935

☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. See NR Criteria Statement form.

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Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community
Hanson

Area

Property Address
641 High Street

Form #
2

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form



Check all that apply:

- ☒ Individually eligible. ☐ Eligible only in a historic district.
☐ Contributing to a potential district. ☐ Potential historic district.

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Statement of Significance by **Dempsey/Driemeyer**.

The First Congregational Church at 641 High Street is a good example of a towered nave church in the Greek Revival style such as are scattered throughout the New England landscape. Common massing characteristics of this early nineteenth century church form include a gabled nave with symmetrical fenestration on the side elevations and a steepled tower centered on the gable end. This church, which dates to 1836, is at least the second one to occupy the site since the organization of the West Parish of Pembroke in 1748. The First Congregational Church meets criteria A and C at the local level. It retains integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, feeling and association.